

My Personal Challenge

Five years ago on TV, I watched as a group of people were interviewed, who had completed a 12-week Body for Life nutrition/exercise challenge and I was amazed at the results. I started the 12-week challenge and couldn't finish it because one of our twins was in a sledding accident and I spent a week in the hospital with her.

This time my challenge incentive came from a low bone density test. The test showed me as having osteopenia (the beginning of osteoporosis). Weightlifting is one of the best ways to keep bones healthy, so I decided to start my exercise/nutrition challenge in January, 2005. I completed the 12-week challenge in April, 2005 and it was definitely worth taking. I learned a lot about getting in shape, both physically and mentally, and I'm thankful to have this knowledge because it will be helpful for me to utilize throughout the rest of my life.



I learned that instead of dieting I can enjoy foods that are healthy. It's best to eat something healthy every two hours, because it is much easier for our bodies to digest small amounts of food six times each day, than it is to digest large amounts three times a day. Drinking at least eight glasses of water every day is very helpful for good health and losing weight. I started using 8-inch plates for my meals to keep food portions in check.

I exercise regularly in our basement gym each morning before work and on Saturday mornings. My weekly schedule includes: weightlifting M-W-F and cardiovascular workouts T-Th-S. I hope to continue my lunch hour jazzercise classes when my job allows it, and I walk during breaks and lunch each day. After exercising, my energy level greatly improves. I feel happier due to the release of positive endorphins, plus I truly enjoy feeling better both physically and mentally!



It is very helpful to keep an *exercise calendar*. This is a monthly calendar on which I mark a day off each time I complete my daily exercises. These calendars are very helpful because they motivate me to keep my exercise routine. My goal is to complete the calendar (as much as possible) by the end of each month.

Being healthy means taking proper care of our bodies, plus exercising and eating nutritionally to achieve, strengthen, and continue good health. An important part of becoming physically and nutritionally fit is deciding for ourselves that we are ready to change negative habits in our lives. Making this healthy change takes commitment, and a challenge, goal etc. to help motivate us.

My husband and I have five children living at home. Their ages are: 19, 18, 15, 11 and 11. Best Wishes to anyone who decides to help themselves feel better (inside and out)!

Submitted by a State of Michigan employee